

MEDIA PACKAGE

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims priority to U.S. Provisional Patent Application Serial No. 60/799,072, filed May 9, 2006, entitled "Media Package," the disclosure of which is herein incorporated by reference in its entirety.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

[0002] The present invention relates to packages for containing media such as compact discs or DVD discs. Particularly, the present invention is directed to a package for carrying media comprising an assembly that has at least one media-carrying component and a protective cover configured and adapted to receive the at least one media-carrying component, each of which includes a latching element for engaging the other.

2. Description of the Related Art

[0003] A variety of media containers are known in the art for storage, transport and/or sale of media, such as compact discs ("CDs"), digital video discs ("DVDs") and the like. Of such devices, many include a simple hinged case into which a disc is inserted. Multiple disc packages often include a case and a plurality of disc trays formed in or attached to the case. Typically, such trays, are not easily removed from the outer container.

[0004] Therefore, there is a need for a container for storing media, such as CDs and DVDs, which is economical to manufacture and capable of containing multiple storage trays which are easily removable by a user.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] The purpose and advantages of the present invention will be set forth in and apparent from the description that follows. The present invention provides a media container for transport, display and/or storage of one or more media discs, for example. The subject media container includes features that allow a user to remove one or more discs from a protective cover, as well as a latching feature that allows the one or more discs to be securely held within the protective cover.

[0006] To achieve these and other advantages and in accordance with the purpose of the invention, as embodied, the invention includes an assembly and a protective cover. The assembly has a plurality of media-carrying components, which are configured and adapted for engaging media held thereby, and a first latching element. The protective cover is capable of covering at least a portion of the assembly and has a second latching element. The assembly is adapted and configured for insertion into the protective cover, wherein the first latching element engages the second latching element to inhibit removal of the assembly from the protective cover.

[0007] In accordance with another aspect of the invention, the media package includes an assembly and a protective sleeve. The assembly includes a plurality of media-carrying components, which in-turn include one or more trays capable of carrying media. The assembly further includes a first latching element. The protective sleeve is adapted and configured for receiving the assembly and has a

second latching element, which engages the first latching element upon insertion of the assembly.

[0008] In accordance with the invention, the media is a recorded or printed medium, and can be, for example, a disc. The media-carrying components can be trays and can interlock with adjacent media-carrying components. The media-carrying components can be attached along a common edge thereof and can be mutually attached with a flexible binding. Alternatively, the media-carrying components can be mutually attached with an intermediate element having a hinge element or mutually attached to adjacent media carrying components by way of integrated hinging elements.

[0009] In accordance with the invention, the first latching element can be, for example, a pawl or button and the second latching element can be, for example, an aperture or recess defined in a wall of the protective cover. It should be noted that the first latching element can be associated with the protective cover and that the second latching element with the assembly of media-carrying components. The first latching element can be carried by, formed in or formed on one or a plurality of the media-carrying components. Further, the first latching element can be formed near a plurality of sides of the assembly to enable insertion and latching of the assembly into the protective cover in a plurality of orientations.

[00010] Further, the assembly or cover can comprise a stop to prevent the assembly from entering the cover beyond a predetermined point. The stop can be provided on the assembly, near a hinge of the assembly.

[00011] In accordance with the invention, the protective cover can be a sleeve and can further comprise an end cap secured to one end of the sleeve to define an

internal recess for receiving the assembly. A latching element can be provided in the end cap.

[00012] Also in accordance with the invention, the protective cover can be shaped to resemble an object based on a theme related to the media contained within the package, and can include a contoured surface.

[00013] It is to be understood that both the foregoing general description and the following detailed description are exemplary and are intended to provide further explanation of the invention claimed.

[00014] The accompanying drawings, which are incorporated in and constitute part of this specification, are included to illustrate and provide a further understanding of the method and system of the invention. Together with the description, the drawings serve to explain the principles of the invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

[00015] So that those having ordinary skill in the art to which the disclosed invention appertains will more readily understand how to make and use the same, reference may be had to the drawings wherein:

[00016] Figure 1 is a front isometric view of a first representative embodiment of a media container in accordance with the present invention;

[00017] Figure 2 is an isometric end view of the container of Figure 1;

[00018] Figure 3a is an isometric end view of the container of Figure 1 with the media tray assembly partially removed;

[00019] Figure 3b is an exploded view of the container of Figure 3a;

[00020] Figure 3c is a view of the tray assembly of Figures 3a and 3b;

[00021] Figure 4 is an isometric end view of a second representative embodiment of a media container in accordance with the invention;

[00022] Figure 5 is an isometric end view of the media container of Figure 4, where the media tray assembly is removed from a protective cover;

[00023] Figures 6a and 6b illustrate a third exemplary embodiment of a media container in accordance with the invention, with Figure 6a illustrating the media tray assembly removed from the protective cover and the individual trays fanned apart along the hinge axis;

[00024] Figure 7 illustrates the media container of Figures 6a and 6b with the media tray assembly partially removed from the protective cover;

[00025] Figure 8 is an isometric view of an alternate embodiment of a media container insert in accordance with the invention;

[00026] Figure 9 is an isometric view of the media container tray assembly of Figure 8, illustrating an optional hinged arrangement between adjacent trays; and

[00027] Figure 10 illustrates two alternate embodiments for trays of media containers in accordance with the invention.

[00028] These and other features of the containers of the present invention will become more readily apparent to those having ordinary skill in the art from the following detailed description of preferred embodiments.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[00029] Reference is now made to the accompanying figures for the purpose of describing, in detail, preferred and exemplary embodiments of the present disclosure. The figures and accompanying detailed description are provided to describe and

illustrate exemplary manners in which the disclosed subject matter may be made and used, and are not intended to limit the scope thereof.

[00030] The media packages presented herein may be used for transport, display and/or storage of media, such as recorded and/or printed media. The present invention is particularly suited for use with recorded media in disc format, such as audio CDs, video DVDs and the like. Advantageously, the subject media packages are also suited for additionally or alternatively conveying printed material, such as a booklet.

[00031] For the purposes of explanation and illustration, and not limitation, Figures 1-2 and 3a-3c illustrate a first representative embodiment of a media package in accordance with the present invention, designated generally by reference character 100. Other embodiments of a media package in accordance with the invention, and aspects thereof, are provided in Figs. 4-10, and are described hereinbelow.

[00032] In accordance with the invention, media package 100 is provided including a media tray stack 230 having a plurality of media-carrying components 331a-331d and a first latching element. The media package 100 also includes a protective cover capable of covering at least a portion of the media tray stack and having a second latching element associated therewith. The media tray stack is capable of being inserted into the protective cover, and the first latching element is capable of engaging the second latching element to inhibit removal of the media tray stack from the protective cover.

[00033] When in use, media is housed in media tray stack 230, which is in-turn housed within a protective cover 110 or case. The protective cover can include printed material, which can be provided in the form of a sleeve 115. The sleeve 115, as embodied in Figures 1-2 and 3a-3c, is slid over the protective cover 110, and is

held in place at one end by an expanded width portion 120 of the cover 110, and at the other end by an end cap 125, which engages the main body portion of the cover 110. Alternatively, the sleeve 115 can be secured to the cover 110 by an adhesive or other fastening means. Alternatively still, the printed material can be printed directly onto the cover 110, or can be provided by way of planar adhesive stickers, for example.

[00034] The cover 110 includes five walls: an end wall 215; top and bottom walls 216a, 216b; and two edge walls 217a, 217b. The sixth side of the cover, as embodied, includes an aperture 332 for insertion of the media tray stack 230. It is to be understood that the cover can vary from this configuration. For example, the cover can be a "partial" cover, such as one having only top and edge walls. The cover 110 has rigidifying ribs 313 formed in at least one of the top and bottom walls to strengthen the cover 110 and to protect the media stored within the package. Optionally, a window 117 can be provided to allow viewing of the contents within the cover 110. As illustrated, a user can see through both the sleeve 115 and cover 110 by virtue of a transparent region in the sleeve 115 and an aperture 117 formed in the sidewall of cover 110, to see the media trays 230. In the embodiment of Figures 1-2 and 3a-3c, a stop 312 is provided in the form of a step in the cover 110.

[00035] A media tray stack 230, including a plurality of abutting and/or connected trays 331a-331d, which directly hold media, is received by the protective cover through aperture 332 formed at one end thereof. As illustrated, the uppermost media tray 331d is a disc tray, and includes a disc-holding detent 338 and a central spindle 339 (or rosette) for directly engaging a media disc. The individual media trays 331a-331d of the assembly 230 can be joined along a common edge by a flexible binding 333 as illustrated, or by another hinge means, as described in further detail below in connection with other embodiments. The binding 333 can be of any

suitable material, but is preferably a plastic film, fabric, paper or composite material attached to the media trays by an adhesive. Such configuration is described in U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/259,341, filed September 27, 2002, and issued as U.S. Patent No. 7,070,048 on July 4, 2006, which is expressly incorporated herein by reference in its entirety. Moreover, the media tray stack 230 can be housed in a folded jacket as described in the foregoing reference, which entire assembly can be inserted into the cover 110 in accordance with the invention.

[00036] Alternatively, a book-like stack of trays with a cover, wherein the spine of the cover includes an extra fold to better accommodate an opened stack, such as that described in U.S. Patent Application Publication 2007/0000803, dated January 4, 2007 (corresponding to U.S. Patent Application No. 10,556,531) and International Patent Application Number PCT/US2004/015201 (published as WO2004/102573), can be substituted for the media tray stack 230. The foregoing patent applications are expressly incorporated herein by reference, in their entireties.

[00037] Alternatively still, the trays 331a-331d can simply stack on top of one another, preferably engaging one another to inhibit relative movement therebetween when stacked. For example, if each of the trays 331a-331d of assembly 230 is formed to include indentations 335 to facilitate removal of tray contents by a user, the indentations 335 can be formed such that a complementary contour on the lower face of the tray results. For example, when stacked, the lower face of the tray 331d, at indentation 335 nests adjacent to an upper surface of the tray 331c immediately below, at the indentation 335. Such matching contours can be provided at other locations, in connection with other features, in each of the media trays 331a-331d. Alternatively still, mating elements for the express purpose of securing successive trays to one another can be provided. Since the cover 110 prevents relative movement

of the trays 331a-331d from one another normal to their surface, relative transverse movement of the trays 331a-331d relative to one another is ideally additionally inhibited.

[00038] The end cap 125 is provided to enclose one end of the cover 110. The end cap 125 can attach to the cover 110 in any suitable manner. Preferably, however, the end cap 125 is mechanically fitted to the cover 110 such as by a snap feature 319, preferably a one-time snap fit, in which the cap is not easily removable from the cover 110.

[00039] A latching mechanism 320 for mutual engagement of the cover 110 and the media tray assembly 230 is provided in accordance with the invention. In the embodiment shown in Figures 1-2 and 3a-3c, the latching mechanism 320 includes an attachment portion 321 for attachment to the cover 110 (in this case, to the cap 125 of the cover), a release button 323 which is pushed by a user to move the tab portion 325. The tab portion 325 extends from the button 323 and supports a pawl 327 to engage the media tray assembly 230. The pawl 327 engages a corresponding element (not shown) on the media tray assembly 230.

[00040] As is best seen in Figure 3c, which is a view of the media tray assembly 230 and the latching mechanism 320 removed from the cover 110, the tab portion 325 extends to a point that is between adjacent media trays. The pawl 327 engages a corresponding recess in the underside of the respective media tray. Alternatively, an aperture can be formed through the entire thickness of the media tray. Naturally, the precise manner in which the latching elements engage can vary as necessary or desired. As will be apparent to one of skill in the art, other releasable latch arrangements are possible although not explicitly set forth herein.

[00041] Further, a second latching mechanism 320 can be provided along the opposite wall of the media package 100, such that the user would need to “pinch” both buttons (e.g., 323) in order to remove the tray assembly 230 from the cover 110. In such an arrangement, a second button (e.g., 323), tab portion (e.g., 325) and pawl (e.g., 327) would be provided. The same attachment portion 321 can be utilized, if desired. Moreover, the two latching mechanisms can be aligned with one another or offset along the width of the container. Alternatively still, two latching mechanisms can be provided side-by-side, if desired. Even more than two latching mechanisms can be provided as well.

[00042] Each tray 331a-331d can be provided with latching portions on each or a plurality of sides, such that the assembly 230 can be inserted in any orientation. If the tray assembly 230 is formed so as to include interlocking elements, and no binding 333 or hinge, the assembly 230 can be inserted in such that any of the four sides thereof 371-374 can be inserted into the cover 110 first, with each tray being provided with latching portions on each side. As such, the order in which the trays 331a-331d are stacked and the orientation in which they are inserted into the housing is immaterial. In the embodiment of Figures 3a-3c, to achieve this aspect of the invention, each tray 331a-331d is provided with four recesses on its bottom surface, one along each of the four sides thereof. If recesses are provided on both the top and bottom of each of the trays 331a-331d, or in the form of an aperture through the trays, the tray assembly could further be inserted upside-down from the orientation illustrated.

[00043] Figures 4, 5, 6a, 6b and 7-11 illustrate a second embodiment and variations thereof of media packages in accordance with the present invention. Figures 4 and 5 are isometric end views of a second representative embodiment of a

media package 500 in accordance with the invention, with Figure 5 showing the media tray insert 430 removed from the protective cover 410. This embodiment differs from the prior embodiment of Figures 1-2 and 3a-3c primarily with respect to the placement and design of the latching mechanism 438, the manner in which the media trays of the media tray assembly 430 are connected, and in the construction of the cover 410 itself.

[00044] The cover 410, as illustrated, includes five walls, including an integral end portion 415, top and bottom walls 416a, 416b and sidewalls 417a, 417b. A sleeve construction with end cap, as shown in the embodiment of Figure 1-2 and 3a-3c can be used, however. As with the above-described embodiment, the media tray assembly 430 is inserted into the cover 410 and releasably latches thereto.

[00045] The latching mechanism 437 includes a button 438, which is pushed by a user to release the media tray assembly 430 from the cover 410. The button is integrally formed (in this embodiment) with tab 536 having a pawl 439 at the distal end thereof. The tab 536 and button 438 are preferably integrally formed with a portion of one of the trays, in this case, the topmost tray 431a. The tab 536 is flexible, with respect to the tray 431a, which allows flexure of the tab upon depression of the button 438. This urges the pawl 439 away from a corresponding latching element of the cover 410, in this case, an aperture 411. Alternatively, the latching mechanism 437 can include a hinge and a return mechanism, such as a spring. Such spring can be, for example, a metal leaf spring. The hinge can include two mutually engaging components, can include a pin, or can be a so-called "living hinge" formed by creating a reduced thickness line in the material of the media tray.

[00046] Security features to prevent theft of the contents of the media package can be incorporated into the package. The latching mechanism can be configured to

include a removable component, which prevents opening of the package, and which is not removed until the consumer purchased the media package and its contents at the cashier. Naturally, security features of other types can be incorporated in the subject packages as well. For example, packages in accordance with the present invention can include a feature such as the Red Tag™ system, available from AGI-AMARAY. Such system includes a removable locking element which prevents removal of a disc held in a disc tray. Such locking elements can be utilized in individual ones of a plurality of trays in accordance with the invention, or can be modified to include multiple prongs to engage a plurality of disc trays with a locking element. U.S. Patent Application Ser. No. 11/027,938, filed January 4, 2005, which is hereby incorporated by reference, describes this feature in further detail.

[00047] When the user inserts the media tray assembly 430 into the cover 410, the position of the resting position of the tab 536, and the height of the pawl 439 are preferably such that the tab 536 initially deflects downward as the pawl passes under a latching portion 412 of the cover 410. When the pawl 439 reaches the aperture 411, the tab and pawl 439 will move upward and the pawl 439 will engage the aperture 411, due to the resiliency of the material of the tab 536 and/or a spring, as described above.

[00048] The trays 431a-431c of the media tray assembly 430 are, in this embodiment, hingedly attached to adjacent trays. In such embodiment, elements on one tray engage elements on one or more adjacent trays, and are thus concatenated. Such feature is described in International Patent Application No. PCT/US2005/014580 (published as WO2005/106885A1), which is expressly incorporated by reference in its entirety. The foregoing patent application describes, in part, a binding clip that can be used with a stack of trays, wherein each tray

includes a docking appendage. The binding clip includes segments connected by flexible links, with each segment having a dock portion for receiving a docking appendage.

[00049] Unique trays are provided in the embodiment of Figures 4 and 5. The top media tray 431a includes the latching mechanism 437. The bottom media tray 431c can also include a latching mechanism with or without a corresponding aperture on the cover 410. Alternatively, the bottom media tray 431c can be provided without a latching mechanism 437. By configuring the positioning of the latching elements as desired, the user can be able to insert the media tray assembly 430 in only one way, or in two ways, with the media tray assembly 430 flipped. The positioning of cutout 414 with respect to the contoured button 438 can help guide the user to insert the assembly 430 in only the prescribed manner. However, the media package 500 can be configured such that such cutout 414 is not necessary.

[00050] As shown particularly in Figure 6a, and Figures 8-10, media trays in accordance with the invention can take on various shapes and functions. With reference to Figure 6a, a media tray assembly 630 having a top media tray 631, a middle media tray 632 and a bottom media tray 633 are provided. In this embodiment, the top 631 and bottom 633 media trays include disc-holding detents 638 and are identical to one another. They include an arcuate contoured surface as indicated by reference number 639a, which corresponds with contour 639b of the cover 610. Although a latching mechanism is not shown in Figures 8-10, a mechanism such as that shown in Figures 4 and 5 can be readily incorporated into the design. A latching mechanism(s), such as that described in connection with Figures 4 and 5 can be provided on one or both of the top 631 and bottom 633 media trays.

[00051] Media trays in accordance with the invention can include trays having spindles on each of a top and bottom surface of the tray. Such spindles can be co-axial or can be offset to reduce thickness and/or so that both discs are readily visible. Such an arrangement is described in U.S. Provisional Patent Application Serial No. 60/781,445, filed March 10, 2006, which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

[00052] The middle media tray 632 can be configured to hold a media disc, but can also, as illustrated, be configured with a substantially rectangular recess 637. As is better seen in Figure 10, tray 1033 includes a recess 1034 for receiving a rectangular item, such as a printed booklet. Tabs 1037 are provided to hold the contents of the tray 1033. Aperture 1035 is provided to facilitate removal of the tray's contents by making the contents easily accessible, for example, by the user's finger.

[00053] As seen in Figure 10, an end tray 1031 for use on the bottom and/or top of a media tray assembly, which is not configured to hold any particular object- neither a media disc nor a booklet- can be incorporated into any of the media tray assemblies described herein.

[00054] Hinge region 435 can be of any suitable type. The hinge can be that of a flexible binding type as described above, can include a common hinge element to which each of the media trays is hingedly connected, or can be formed through hinged interconnection of adjacent trays. The hinge region 435, which includes portions of each media tray, extends to outer edges of the package and acts as a stop when inserting the media tray assembly 430 into the cover 410.

[00055] Figure 6b illustrates the entire media package 600 including media tray assembly 435 inserted in cover 610. The cover includes printed material 615 which

can be in the form of a sleeve, or other separately applied printed element, or can be printed directly onto the cover 610.

[00056] Figure 7 illustrates the media package 600, with the media tray assembly 630 partially removed from the cover 610.

[00057] Figures 8 and 9 illustrate a variation of the above described media trays, including a media tray stack 830 including a plurality of middle media trays 834. The middle media trays 834 can be configured to hold media discs or booklets, for example, as shown in Figure 10. As illustrated, the top tray 831a and bottom tray 831b include disc-retaining detents 838. As seen in Figure 9, the topmost middle tray 834a also includes such a detent. As best seen in Figure 8, the outer trays 831a, 831b can include a larger edge radius 836 than inner trays 834 to aide insertion of the trays into a cover. As can be seen, the contour of the face 817 transitions into a flat wall along the end opposite the hinge region 835. If the transition were abrupt, such as a squared-off corner, it would be difficult for a user to insert the media tray stack 830 into a cover. Accordingly, the increased edge radius of the outer trays 831a, 831b helps guide the media tray stack 830 into a cover.

[00058] In accordance with the invention, any combination of middle and outer trays is possible. The outer trays can be configured to be plain (not for holding media), they can be configured to hold printed media or they can be configured to hold recorded media, as can the middle trays.

[00059] Moreover, any total number of trays is possible. Any number of middle trays 834 can be used in accordance with the invention. These trays can mutually engage one another when stacked, can be attached with a flexible binding, can be hinged to one another or can be hingedly connected to one adjacent media trays. Further, if desired, the trays can be mutually connected to adjacent trays by a

pivot, so that they can rotate in the plane of the tray to “fan” open. Such pivot is preferably provided near a corner of the trays.

[00060] Naturally, the middle trays can be configured in any order desired. Further, as is apparent from the first described embodiment, special outer trays, as trays 831a, 831b need not be required in every embodiment.

[00061] The cover (e.g., 110) in any of the foregoing embodiments can be shaped in accordance with the shape of the media tray assembly (e.g., 230) inserted therein, or can be configured to take on any shape, such as a shape in accordance with a theme of a motion picture recorded on the media contained therein. For example, if the media contained within the media package relates to a motion picture on auto racing, the cover can be in the shape of a racecar into which the media tray assembly fits.

[00062] The materials for the subject media container, for the purpose of serving as an example only, are as follows. The media trays themselves can be made from a plastic material such as, for example, polymethyl methacrylate, polypropylene or polyethylene terephthalate a paperboard material, a metal such as aluminum, or a composite material. The protective cover can be formed of plastic, metal, paperboard or composite materials. The sleeve (e.g., 115), which includes printed material can be of any of the foregoing materials, for example, and can include one or more transparent regions, such as at window 117.

[00063] It is to be understood that although certain features are shown and described in connection with particular embodiments, that these features can be integrated with other embodiments and can replace or supplement similar features in those embodiments. It will also be apparent to those skilled in the art that various modifications and variations can be made in the device and method of the present

invention without departing from the spirit or scope of the invention. Thus, it is intended that the present invention include modifications and variations that are within the scope of the appended claims and their equivalents.

What is Claimed is:

- 1) A package for carrying media comprising:
 - a) an assembly of media-carrying components, each of the media-carrying components being adapted and configured for engaging media, the assembly having a first latching element associated therewith;
 - b) a protective cover adapted and configured for receiving and covering at least a portion of the assembly of media-carrying components, the protective cover having a second latching element associated therewith,
 - c) wherein when the assembly of media-carrying components is inserted into the protective cover, the first latching element engages with the second latching element to inhibit removal of the assembly from the protective cover.
- 2) The package of claim 1, wherein the media is a recorded disc medium.
- 3) The package of claim 1, wherein the media is a printed medium.
- 4) The package of claim 1, wherein the media-carrying components are trays.
- 5) The package of claim 1, wherein each of the media-carrying components is adapted and configured to interlock with adjacent media-carrying components.
- 6) The package of claim 1, wherein the media-carrying components of the assembly are attached along a common edge thereof.

- 7) The package of claim 6, wherein the media-carrying components are mutually attached with a flexible binding.
- 8) The package of claim 6, wherein the media-carrying components are mutually attached with an intermediate element having a hinge element.
- 9) The package of claim 6, wherein each media-carrying component is mutually attached to at least one other adjacent media-carrying component by way of a hinge element integrated therein.
- 10) The package of claim 1, wherein the first latching element is a pawl or button and the second latching element is an aperture or recess defined by the protective cover.
- 11) The package of claim 1, wherein the first latching element is an aperture or recess defined by a wall of the media-carrying component and the second latching element is a pawl or button.
- 12) The package of claim 1, wherein the first latching element is carried by, formed in or formed on one of the media-carrying components.
- 13) The package of claim 1, wherein the first latching element is carried by, formed in or formed on a plurality of the media-carrying components.

- 14) The package of claim 1, wherein the first latching element is formed near a plurality of sides of the assembly to enable insertion and latching of the assembly into the protective cover in a plurality of orientations.
- 15) The package of claim 1, wherein either the assembly or protective cover further comprises a stop to prevent the assembly from entering the protective cover beyond a predetermined point.
- 16) The package of claim 15, wherein the protective cover comprises said stop.
- 17) The package of claim 15, wherein the stop is provided on the assembly, near a hinge of the assembly.
- 18) The package of claim 1, wherein the protective cover is a sleeve.
- 19) The package of claim 18, the protective cover further comprising an end cap secured to one end of the sleeve to define an internal recess for receiving the assembly.
- 20) The package of claim 19, wherein the second latching element is positioned in the end cap.
- 21) The package of claim 1, wherein the protective cover is shaped to resemble an object based on a theme related to the media contained within the package.

- 22) The package of claim 1, wherein the protective cover is formed to include a contoured surface.
- 23) A package for carrying media comprising:
- a) an assembly including a plurality of media-carrying components, the media-carrying components including one or more trays configured for carrying media, the assembly further including a first latching element; and
 - b) a protective sleeve configured for receiving the assembly, the sleeve having a second latching element capable of engaging the first latching element and preventing the removal of the assembly from within the protective sleeve.
- 24) A package for carrying media comprising:
- a) an assembly having:
 - i) at least one media-carrying component; and
 - ii) a first latching element; and
 - b) a protective cover configured for receiving the assembly, the protective cover having a second latching element capable of engaging the first latching element.
- 25) The package of claim 24, the assembly further comprising at least one cover element hingedly attached thereto.
- 26) A method for packaging media, the method comprising:
- a) providing an assembly of media-carrying components, each of the media-carrying components being adapted and configured for engaging media, the assembly having a first latching element associated therewith;

b) providing a protective cover adapted and configured for receiving and covering at least a portion of the assembly, the protective cover having a second latching element associated therewith;

c) inserting media into at least one of the media-carrying components;
and

d) inserting the assembly into the protective cover, the first latching element engaging with the second latching element to inhibit removal of the assembly from the protective cover.

27) A method for packaging media, the method comprising:

a) providing an assembly including a plurality of media-carrying components, the media-carrying components including one or more trays configured for carrying media, the assembly further including a first latching element; and

b) inserting media into at least one of the media-carrying components;

c) providing a protective sleeve configured for receiving the assembly, the sleeve having a second latching element capable of engaging the first latching element; and

d) inserting the assembly into the protective sleeve, permitting the first and second latching elements to engage one another.

28) A method for packaging media, the method comprising:

a) providing an assembly having:

i) at least one media-carrying component; and

ii) a first latching element;

b) inserting media into the at least one media-carrying component;

- c) providing a protective cover configured for receiving the assembly, the protective cover having a second latching element capable of engaging the first latching element; and
- d) inserting the assembly into the protective cover, permitting the first and second latching elements to engage one another.

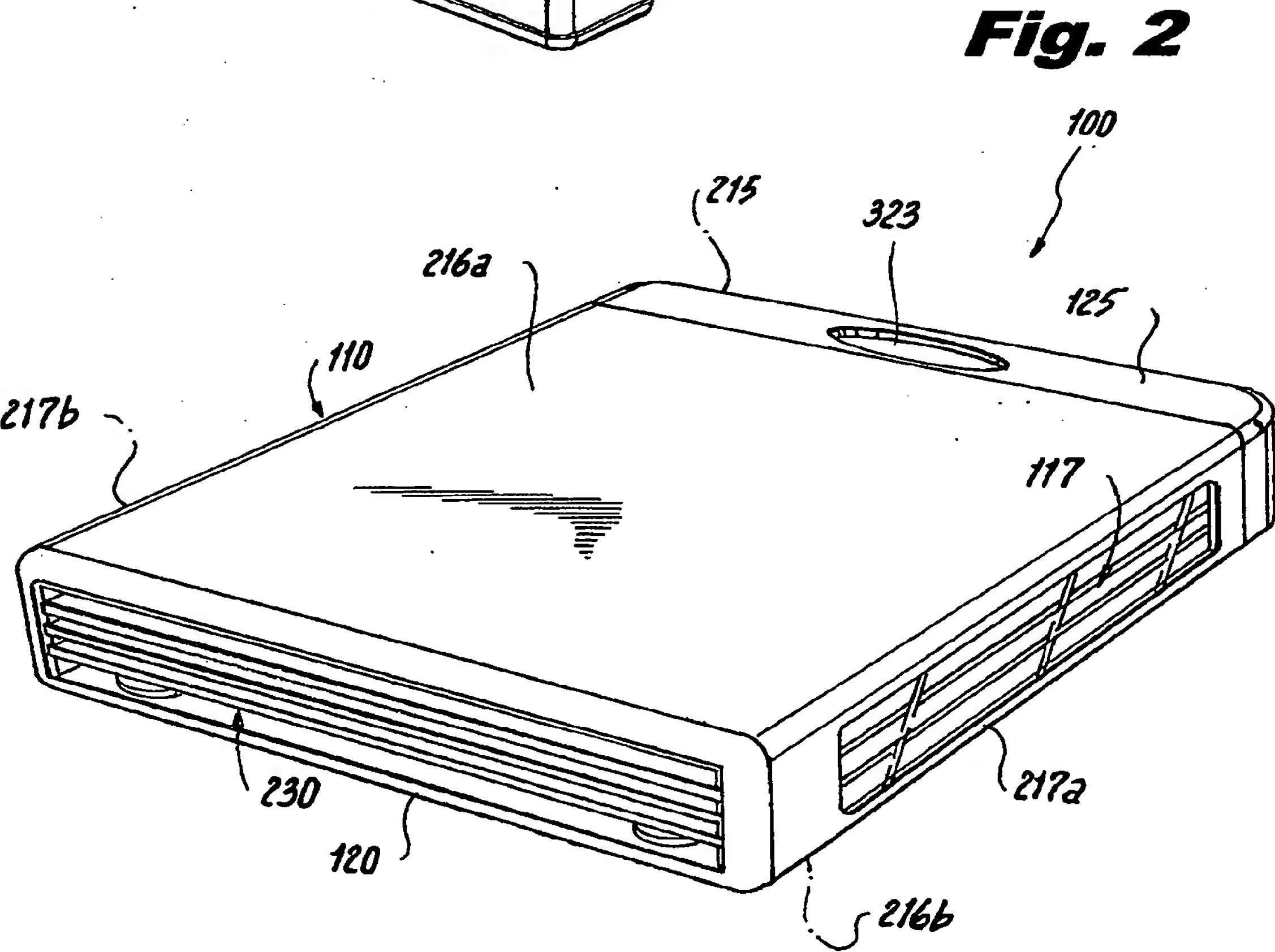
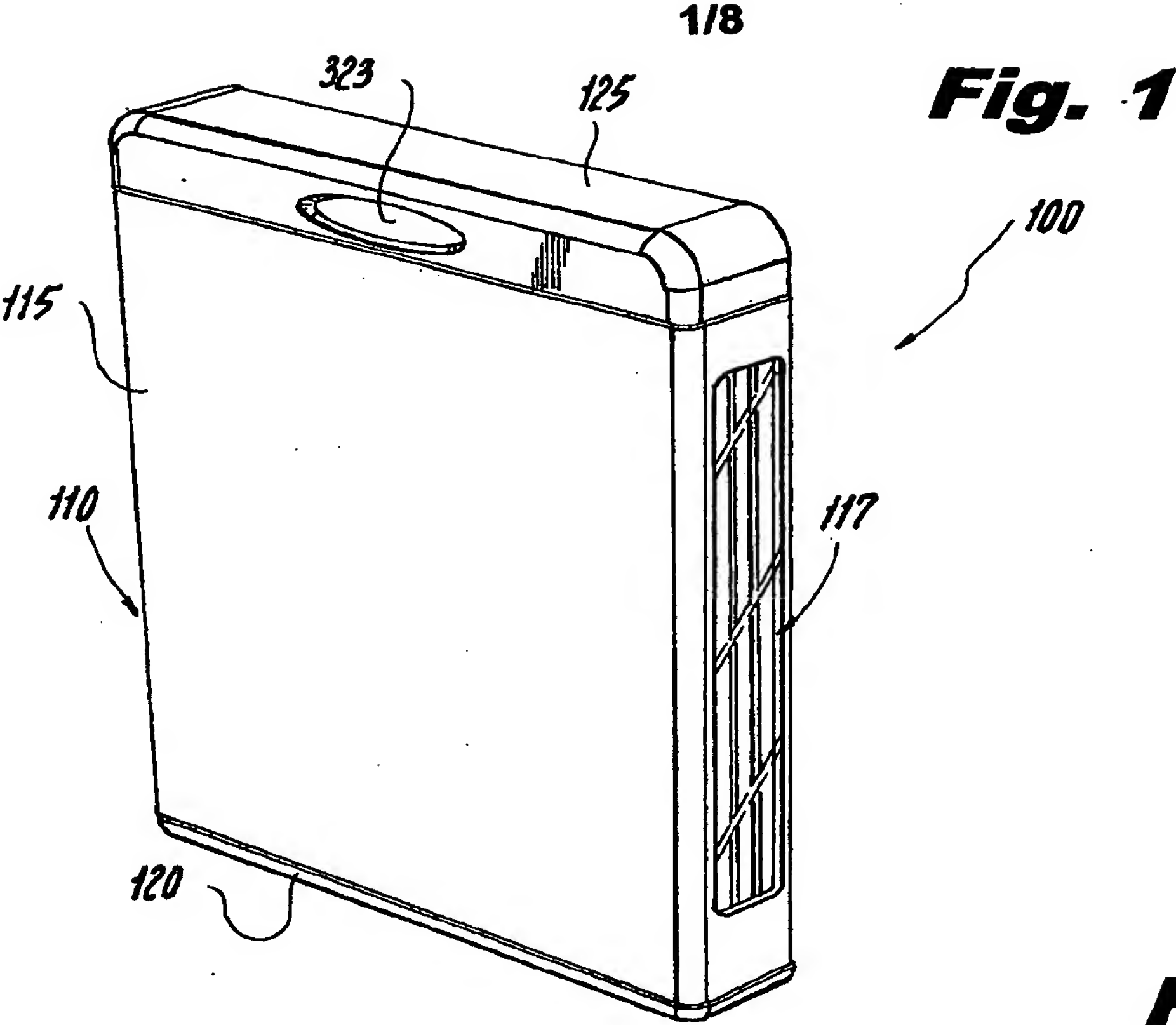


Fig. 3a

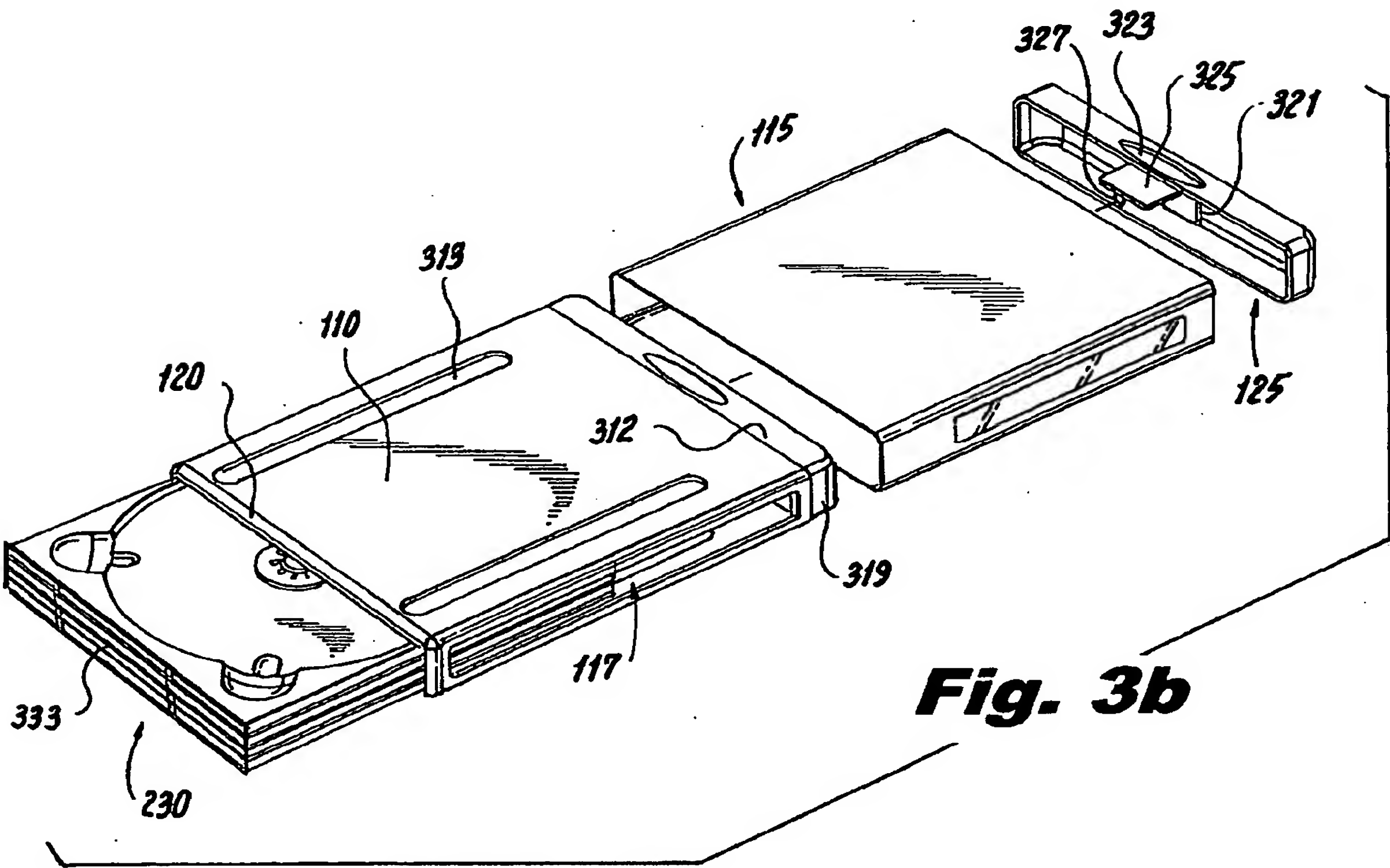
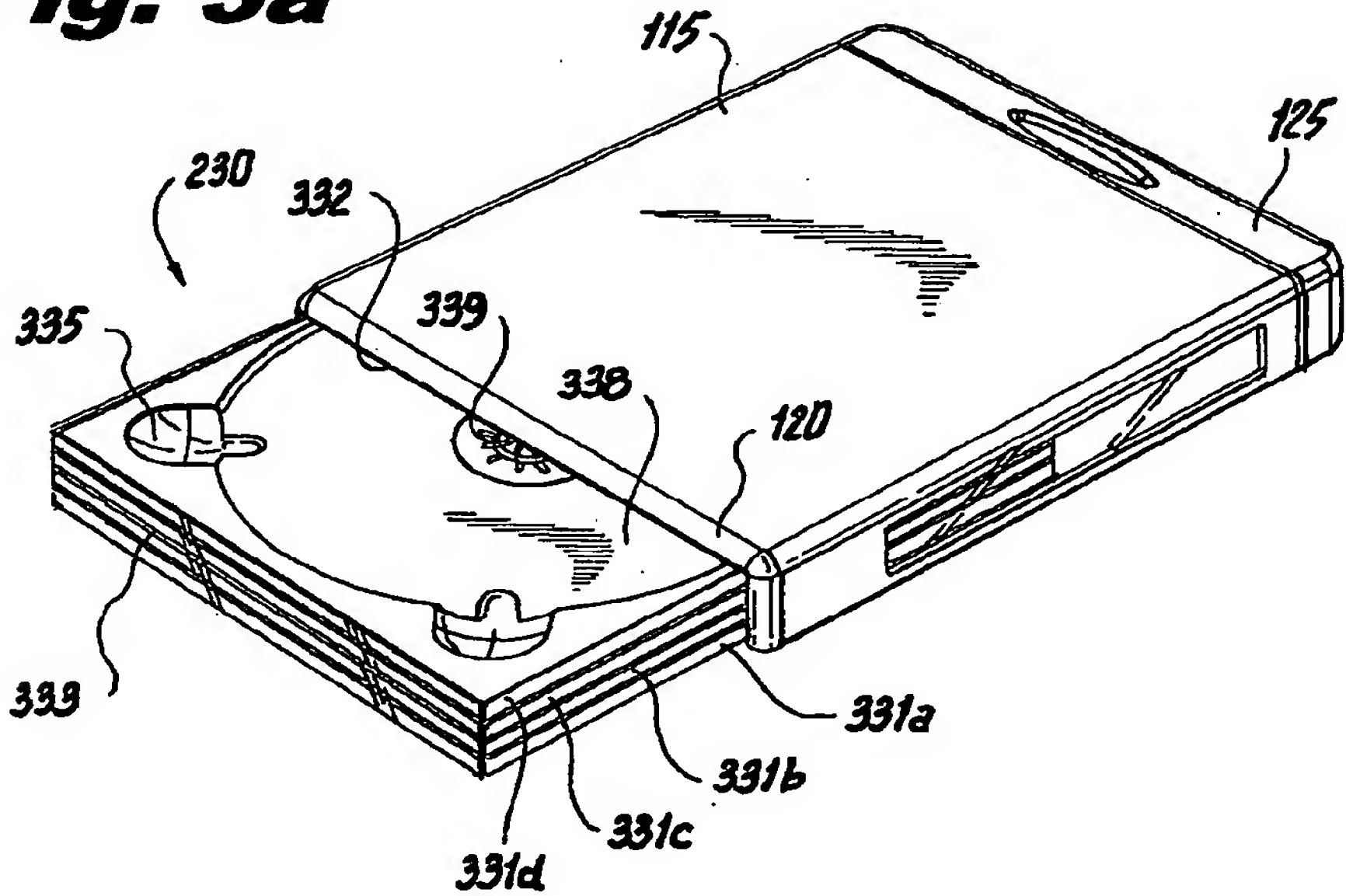


Fig. 3b

3/8

Fig. 3c

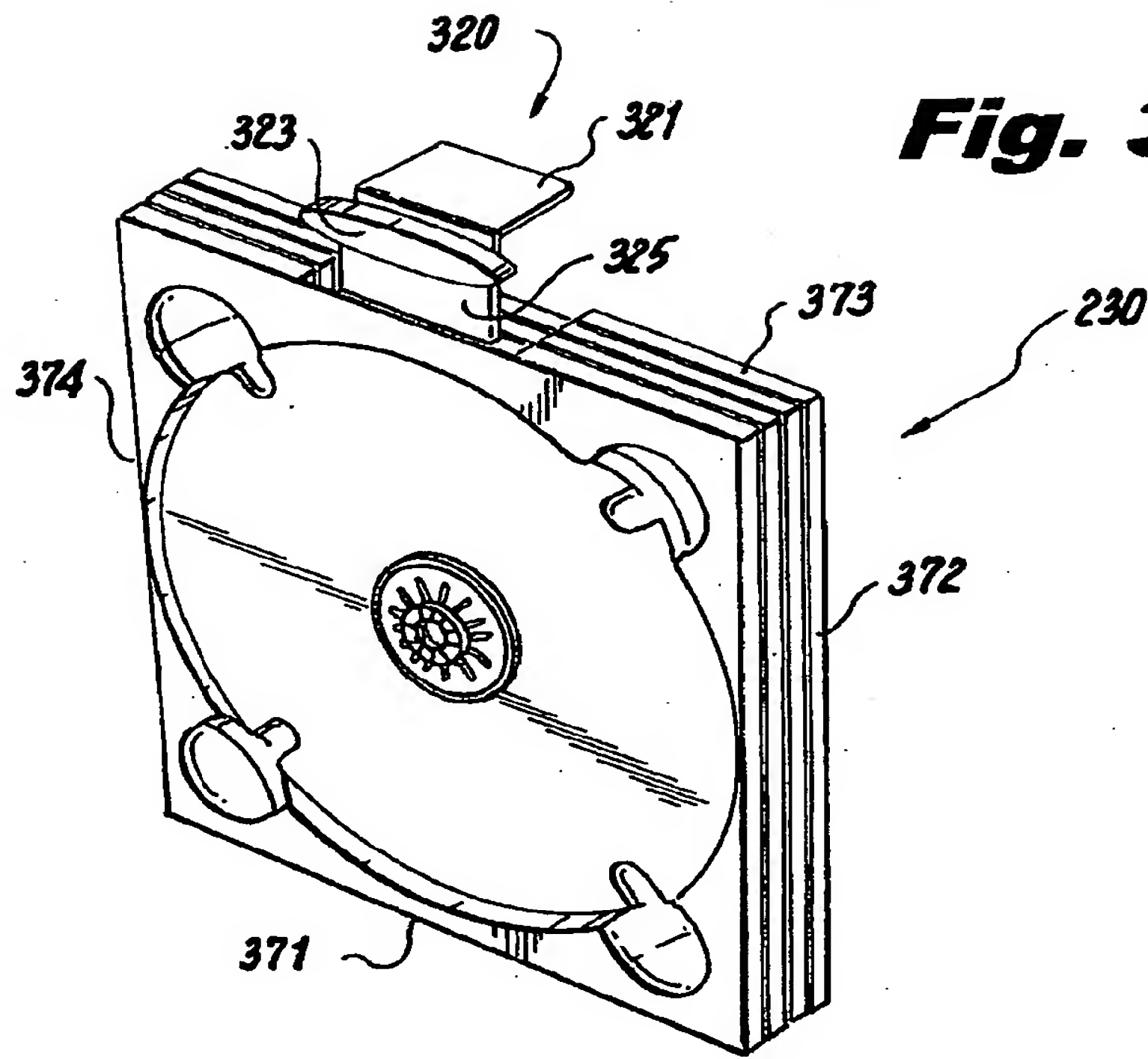
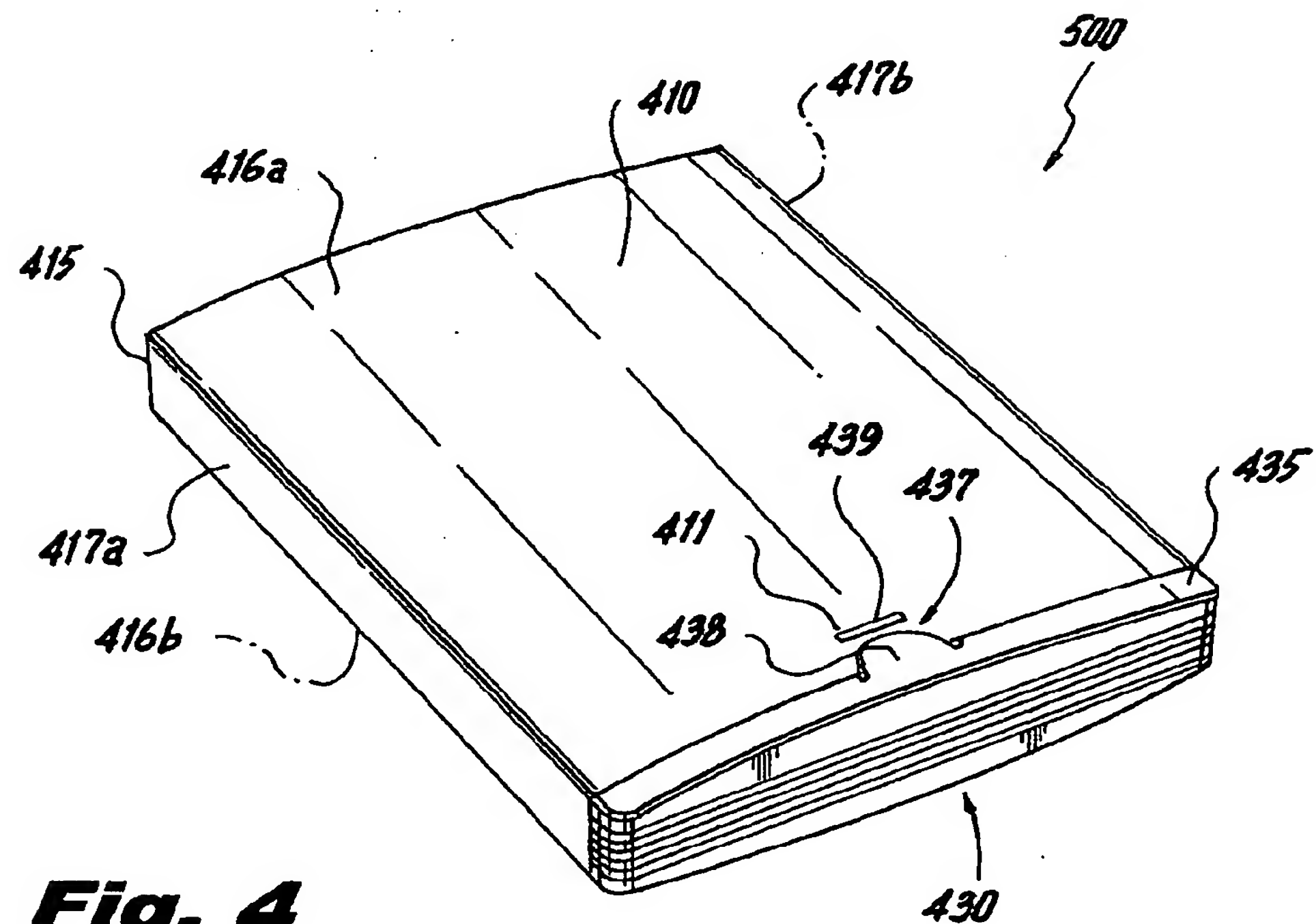
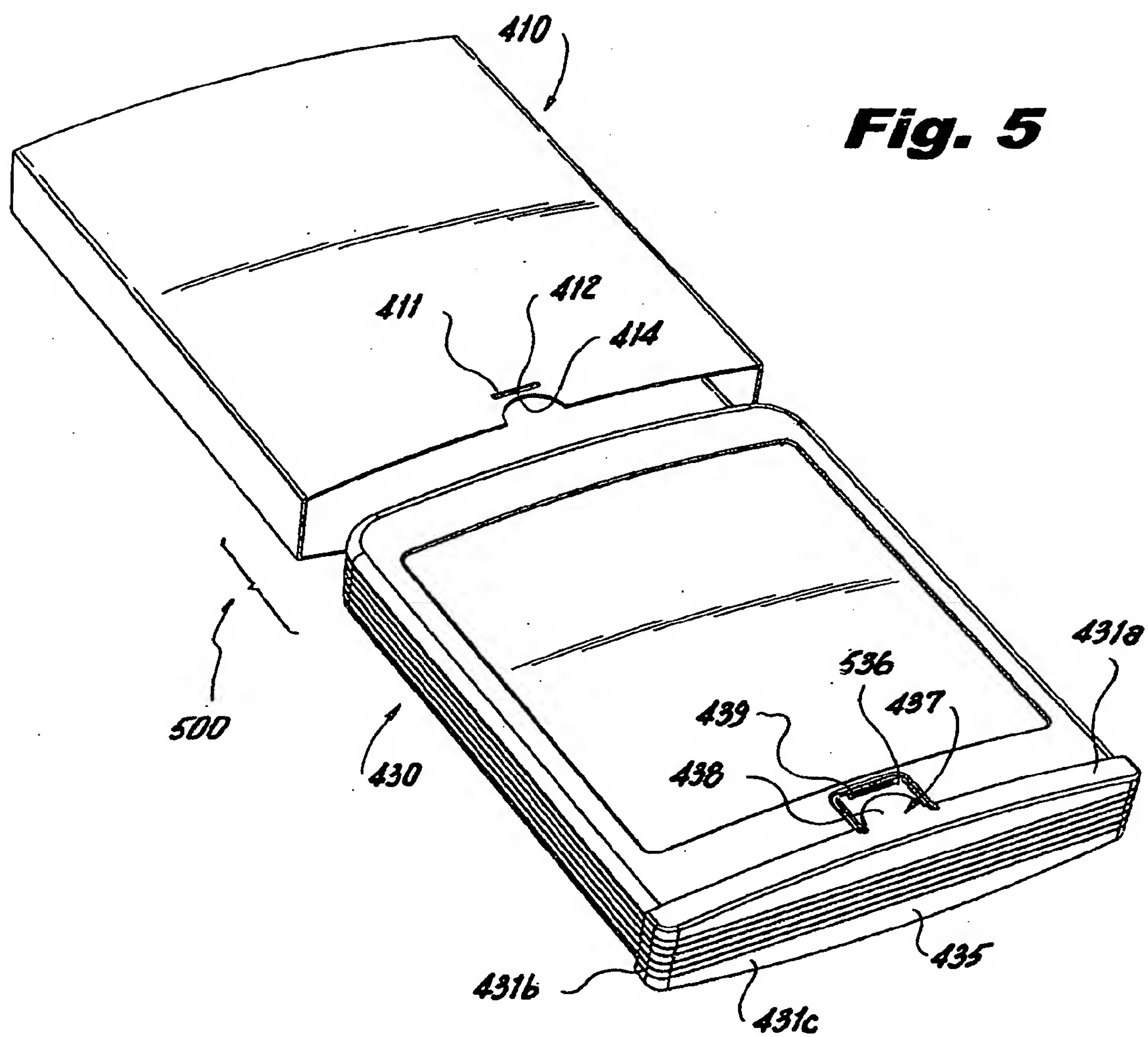


Fig. 4



4/8



5/8

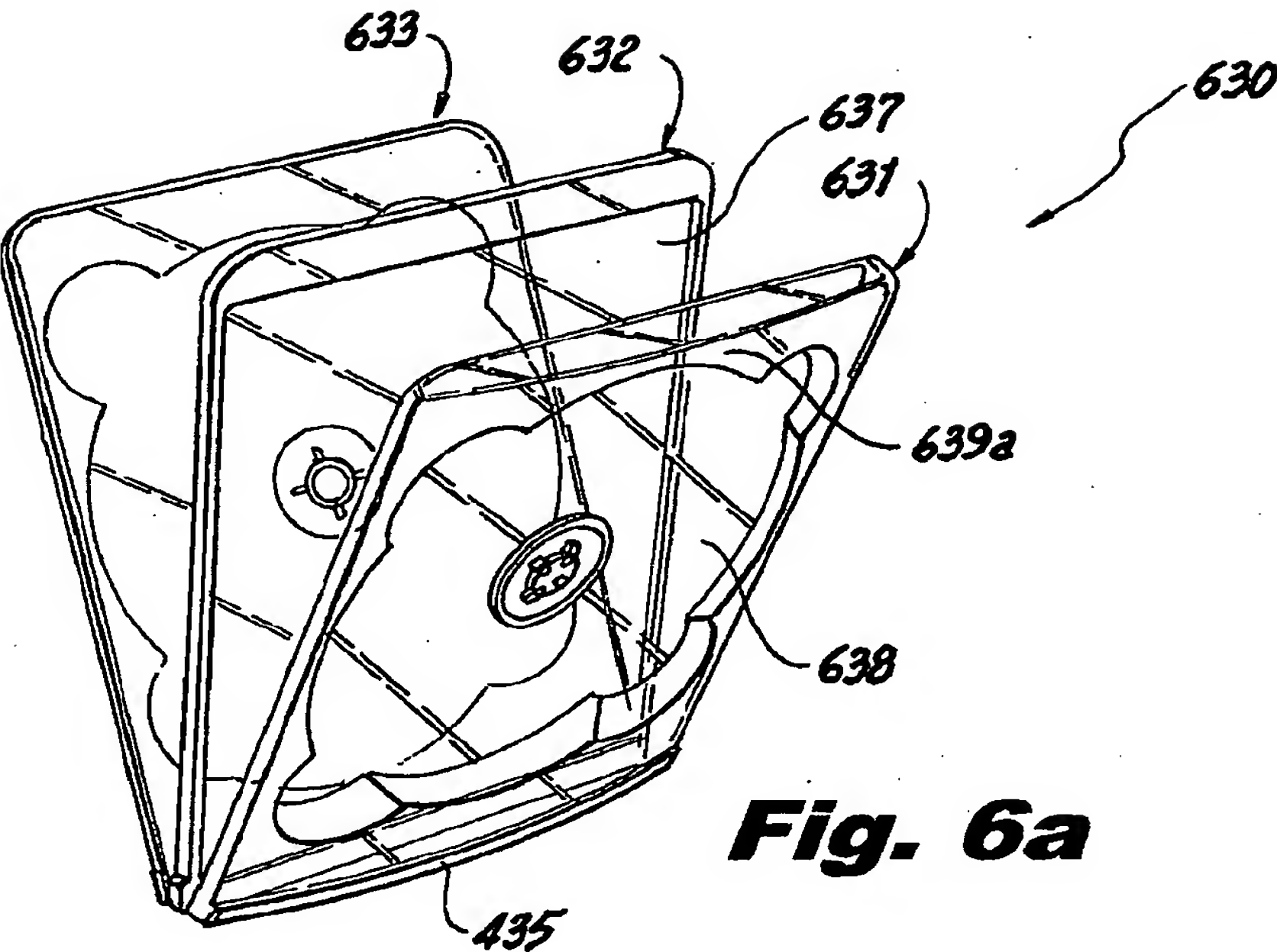
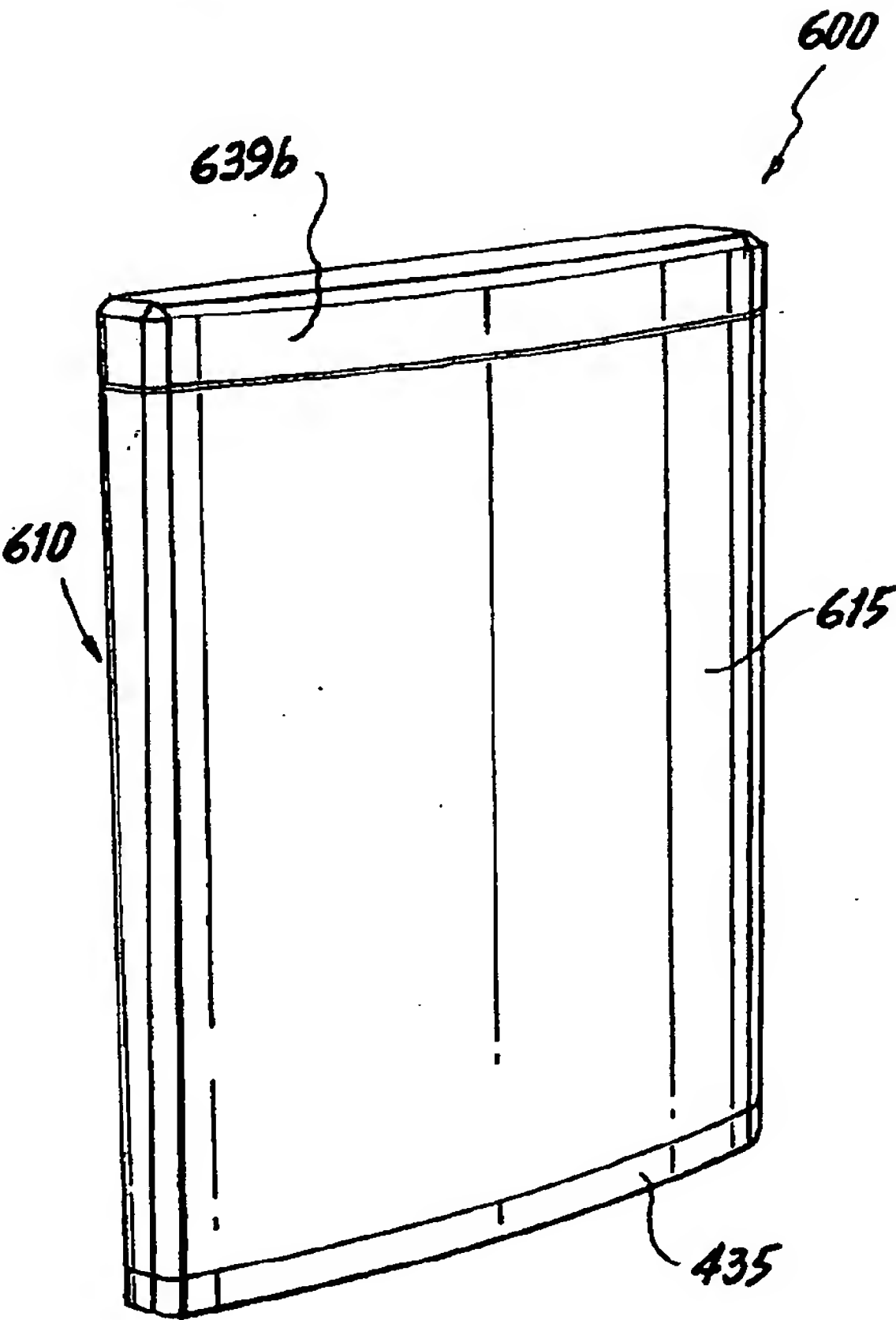


Fig. 6b



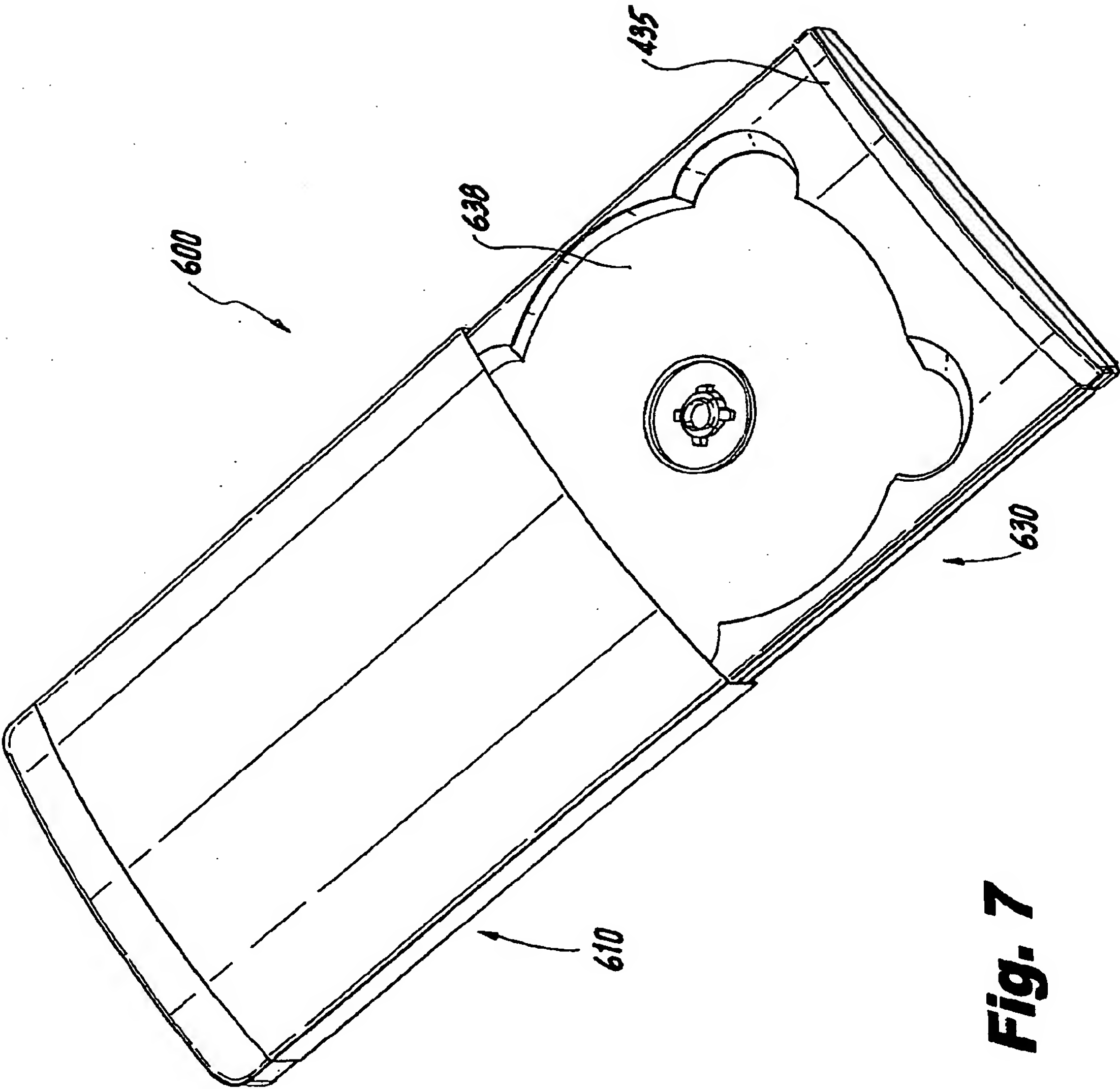


Fig. 7

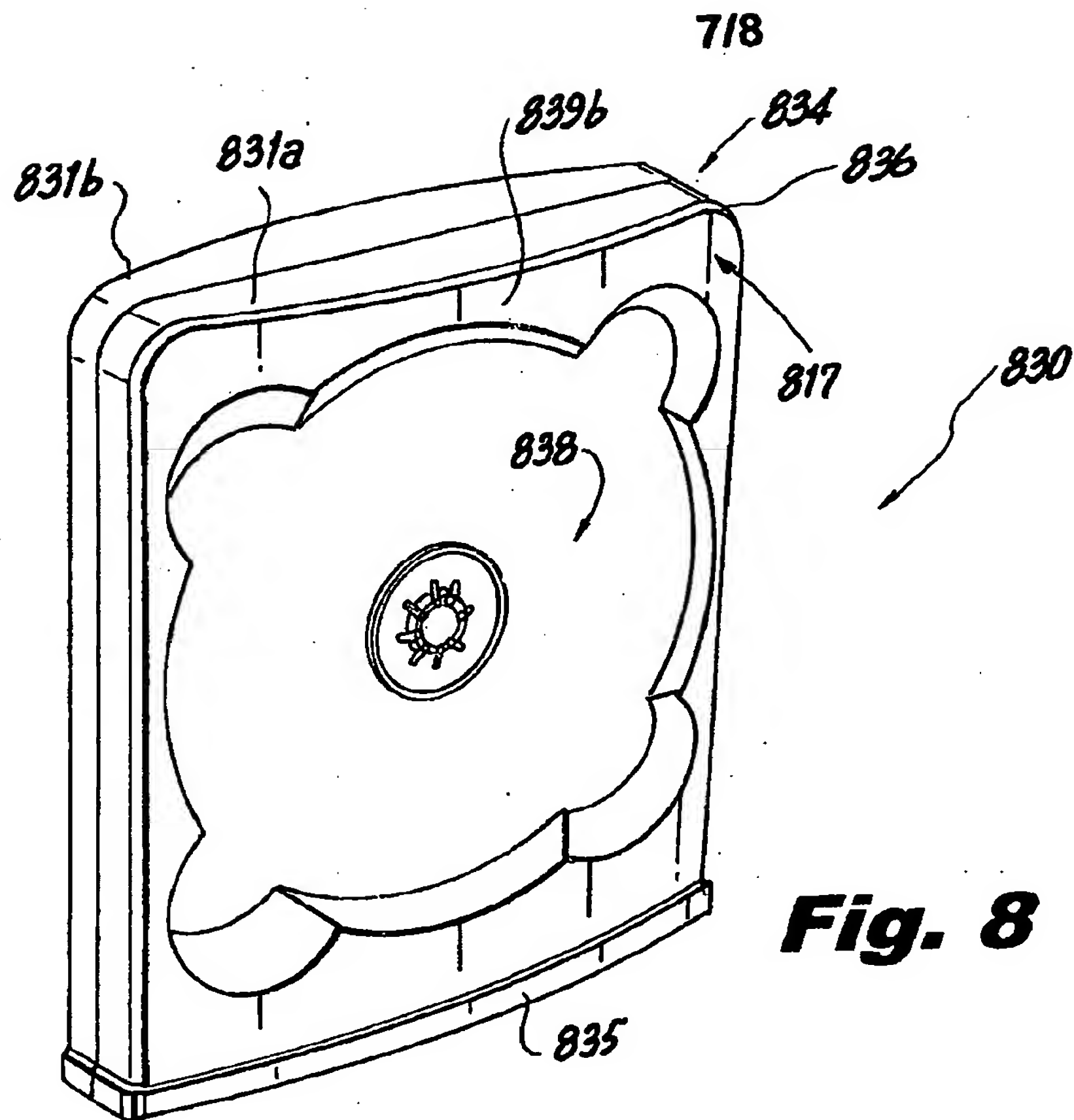


Fig. 8

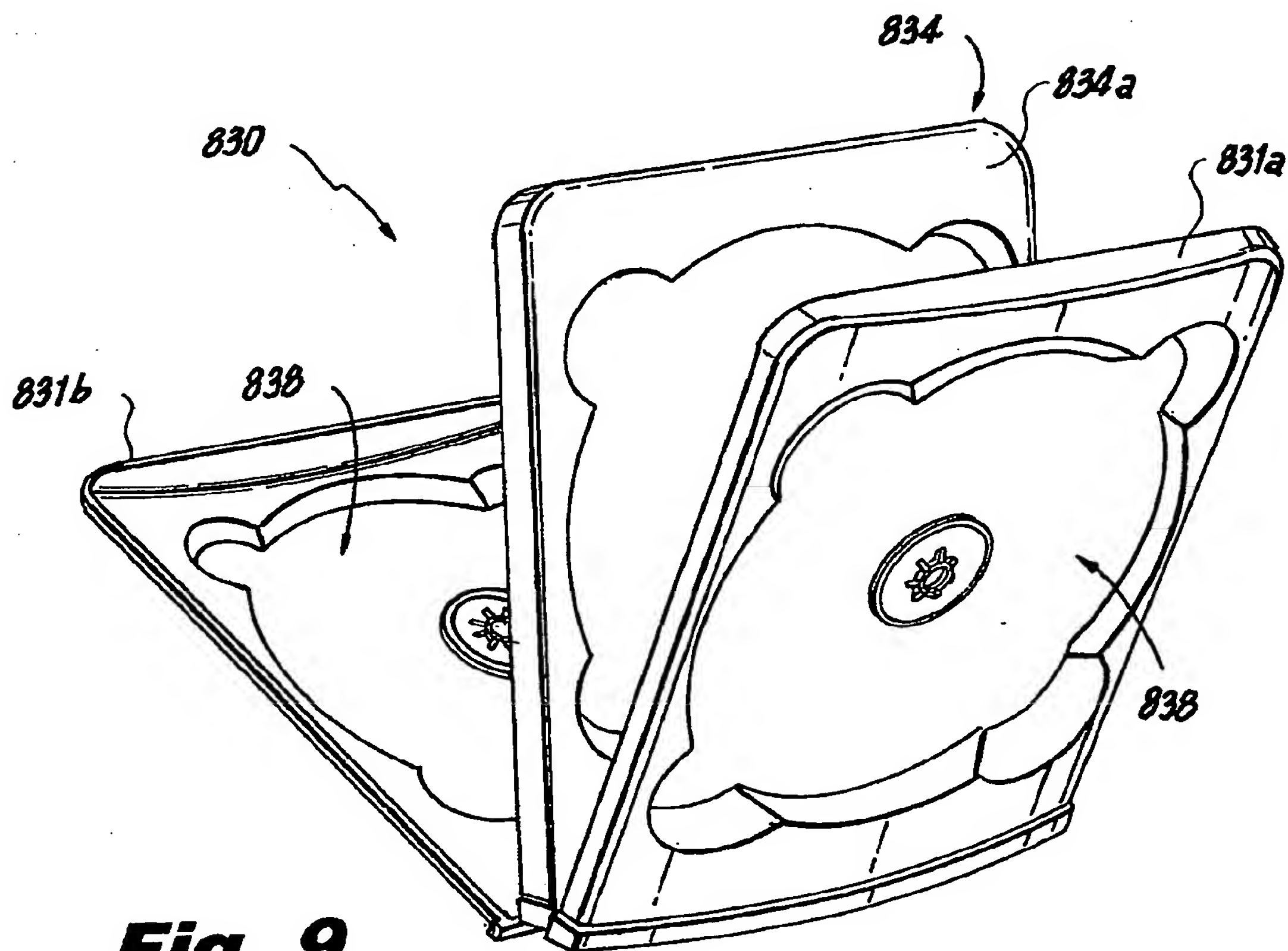


Fig. 9

8/8

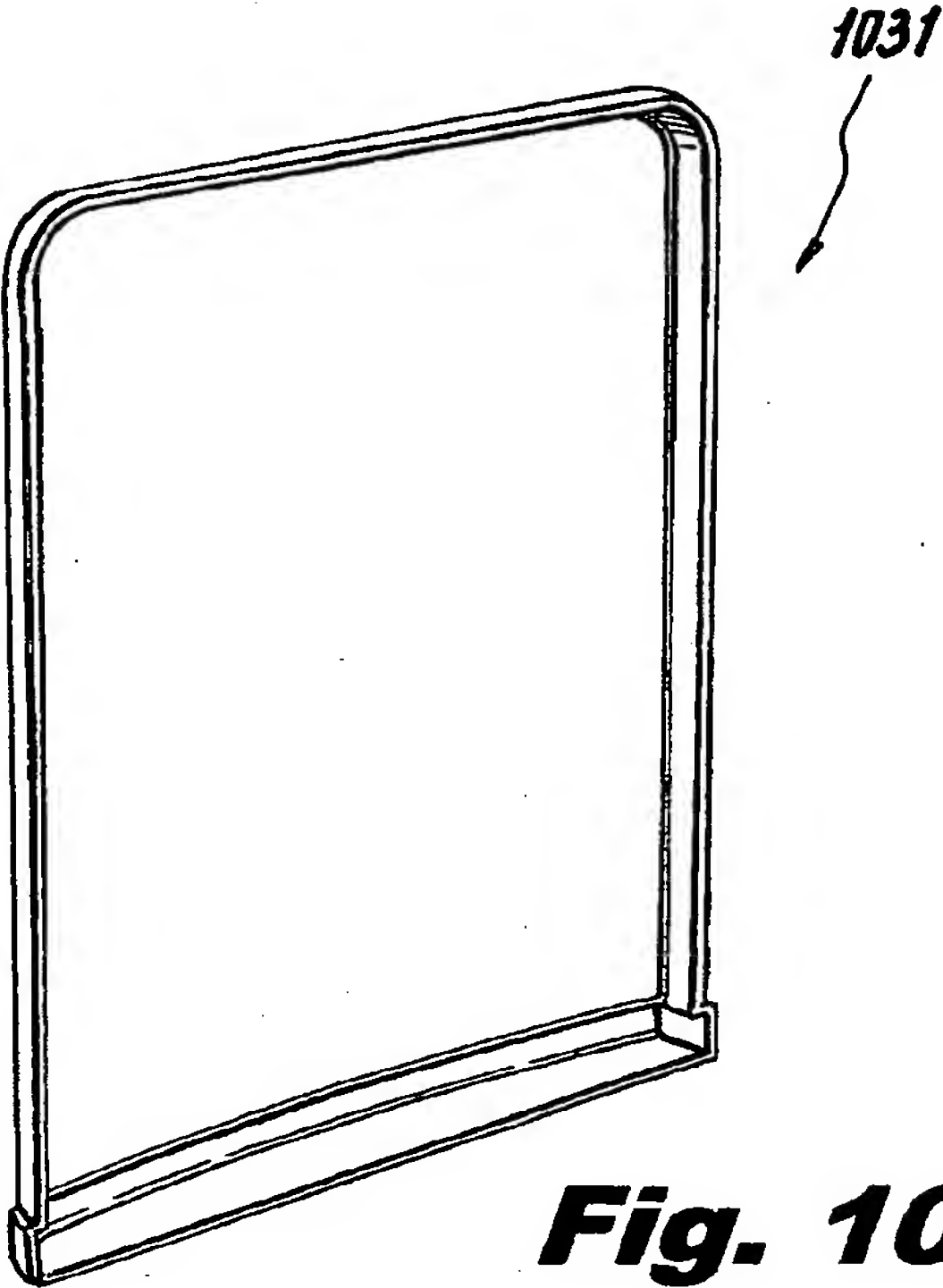


Fig. 10a

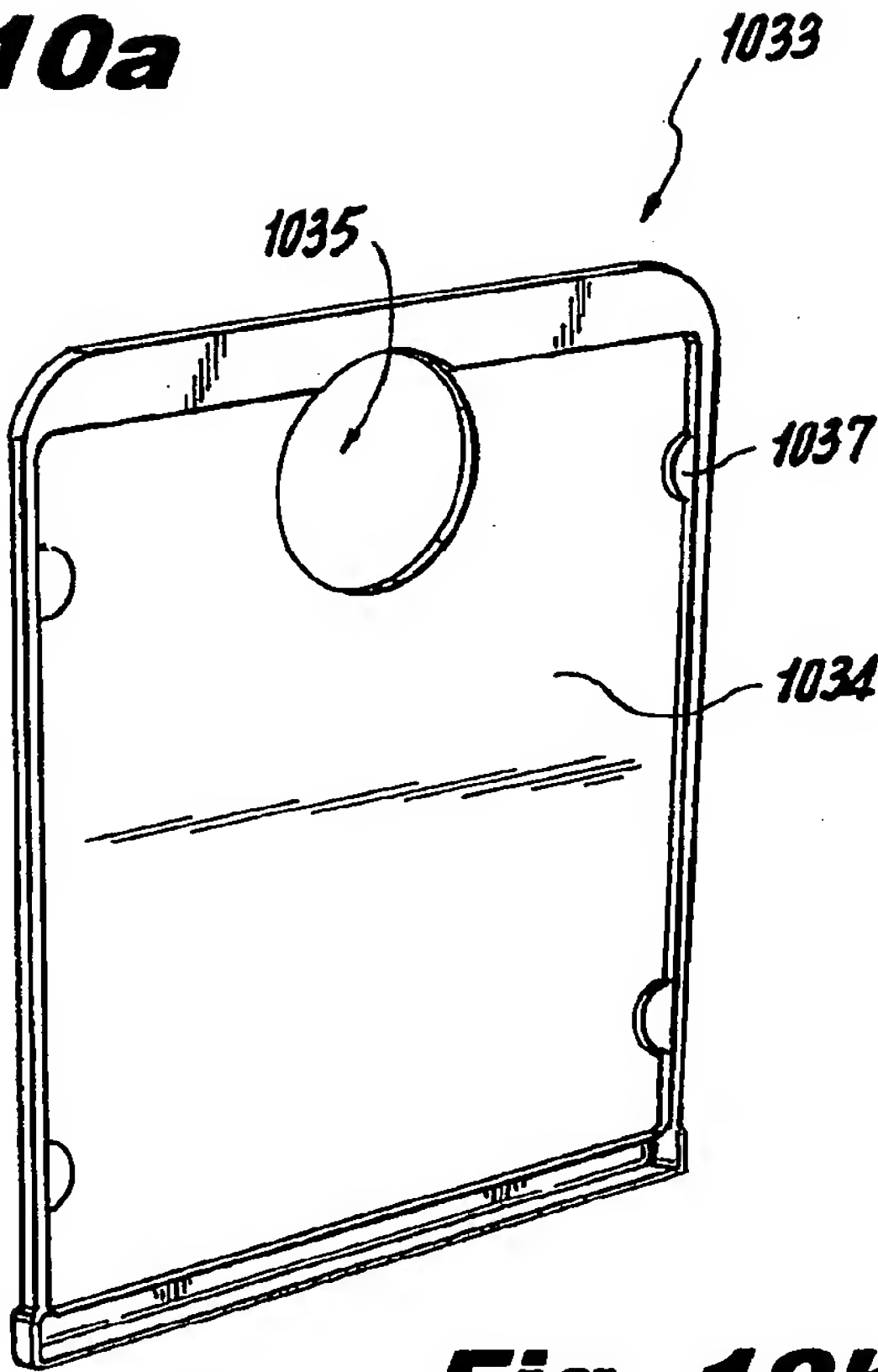


Fig. 10b